

# AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR MICROBIOLOGY

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Members of the Council Policy Committee

Gentlemen:

On Monday I talked to Dr. Martin Alexander on another matter, and he raised a question or a subject which he thought should be brought to the attention of the Council Policy Committee. He felt that the CPC should consider the adequacy of the quarantine specifications for the space program.

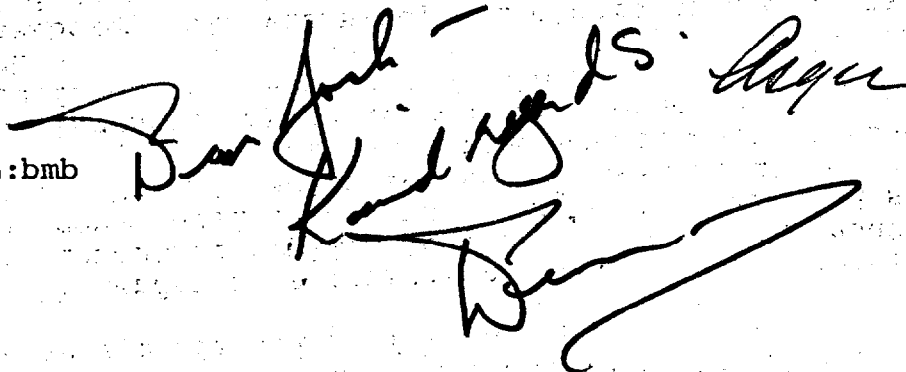
Dr. Alexander is a consultant to NASA. The specifications of the quarantine applied to the Apollo 11 astronauts have never been considered by an appropriate non-committed scientist group. Dr. Alexander feels that NASA should be urged to submit the question of quarantine specifications to open scientific discussion by an appropriate, competent group, and that specifications developed should bear the general approval of such a competent group. Dr. Alexander tells me that Josh Lederberg, Wolf Vishniac, and others have expressed concern and dismay over the NASA quarantine program. Admittedly, they are not so concerned about the hazards connected with the lunar excursion, but they fear that the standards applied for quarantine of the lunar astronauts will be extended to other more uncertain cases. Specifically, they are concerned that loose standards may be applied in the case of a Mars excursion, where there may be substantially greater possibilities of bringing exotic and potentially hazardous life forms to the earth.

Dr. Alexander urges that the CPC discuss this problem, and he would hope that the CPC would bring its influence to bear on NASA as well as on external scientific opinion, so as to develop a sound and effective quarantine system for the space program.

If any of you can offer suggestions as to how I might help in this matter, please pass them on.

Sincerely,

AFL:bmb

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, likely belonging to Asger F. Langlykke, is written over the typed name and extends across the bottom of the page.